

I claim:

- 1 1. A method for organizing and processing electronic
2 information comprising the steps of:
 - 1 organizing the electronic information as a plurality of
2 thoughts;
 - 3 defining a matrix of the plurality of thoughts and
4 further including a plurality of network relationships among
5 the thoughts, wherein each thought may be related to at
6 least one of the other thoughts, and at least one of the
7 thoughts is directly related to one of the other thoughts;
 - 8 selecting a first thought from the plurality of
9 thoughts to be a central thought;
 - 10 displaying an indicium of the central thought and at
11 least one of the related thoughts;
 - 12 selecting a related thought of the central thought to
13 be a new central thought; and
 - 14 displaying an indicium of the new central thought and
15 at least one related thought.
- 16 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the current central
17 thought is associated with information, the method further
18 comprising the step of viewing, editing or processing the
19 electronic information.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more thoughts
21 related to both the first and second thoughts are also
22 displayed.
- 23 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the direct
24 relationships between a plurality of thoughts are
25 graphically represented on the display.
- 26 5. The method of claim 1, wherein indicia of the
27 thoughts on the display are rearranged upon the selection of
28 a new central thought in a manner that graphically reflects
29 the relationship between the thoughts and the new central
30 thought.
- 31 6. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the indicia
32 comprise graphical icons that may be activated by a user.
- 33 7. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one thought

34 is a parent of another thought, and wherein at least one
35 thought is a sibling of another thought, and wherein indicia
36 of each of the thoughts and indicia of the parent and
37 sibling relationships between the thoughts are graphically
38 represented on the display.

39 8. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step,
40 subsequent of loading the contents of said central thought.

41 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the loading step is
42 performed automatically.

43 10. The method of claim 8, wherein said loading step
44 is delayed for a period of time.

45 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the period of time
46 is long enough to permit navigating to another thought
47 before the contents of the central thought are loaded.

48 12. The method of claim 10, wherein the user is
49 appraised by a visual display of the extent to which the
50 period of time has elapsed.

51 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step
52 of creating a file that contains the full location of a
53 device on which the network is initially defined, that file
54 configured so that the thought documents organized by the
55 network are accessible from a remote device having access to
56 the information organized by the network.

57 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the
58 steps of:

1 identifying at least one thought document that does not
2 reside in the memory or storage of a local device;

3 loading selected ones of the identified thought
4 documents to a local device;

5 changing the recorded location of the loaded thought
6 documents to reflect the new local location of the
7 documents.

8 15. The method of claim 1, wherein the thoughts are of
9 a plurality of thought types.

10 16. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of
11 defining further comprises the step of setting sharing

48 27. The method of claim 1 wherein a user can divide a
49 single matrix into one or more individual matrices.
50 28. The method of claim 1 wherein multiple users can
51 simultaneously access a single matrix.
52 29. The method of claim 27 further comprising a method
53 for preventing the creation of conflicting versions of a
54 single thought document.
55 30. The method of claim 1 wherein the display of the
56 thought indicia is based upon particular usage statistics.
57 31. The method of claim 30 wherein the thought indicia
58 are graphically differentiated to reflect temporally-based
59 usage statistics.
60 32. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of
61 defining further comprises the step of generating a matrix
62 based upon a hierarchical file management structure.
63 33. The method of claim 32, wherein the generated
64 matrix may subsequently be modified to incorporate
65 nonhierarchical associations among thoughts.
66 34. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of defining
67 further comprises the step of generating a matrix based upon
68 a preexisting self-referencing network.
69 35. The method of claim 34, wherein the generated
70 matrix may subsequently be modified to incorporate
71 nonhierarchical associations among thoughts.
72 36. The method of claim 34, wherein the self-
73 referencing network comprises the Internet.
74 37. The method of claim 34, wherein said self-
75 referencing network comprises a hypertext document.
76 38. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of defining
77 is, in whole or in part, performed in response to a user's
78 serial selection of files or Internet browsing.
79 39. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of defining
80 is, in whole or in part, performed based upon the results of
81 a database search.
82 40. The method of claim 39 wherein said database
83 represents an index of content on the Internet.

84 41. The method of claim 34 wherein the step of
85 generating is performed in accordance with a web crawling
86 technique and in which the self-referencing network
87 comprises at least one site on the World Wide Web.

88 42. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one file
89 having information associated with a thought resides
90 remotely on a server or other remote device, and wherein the
91 user accesses the matrix from a client or other local
92 device.

93 43. The method of claim 42, further comprising the
94 steps of:

1 based upon the current thought and the defined matrix
2 relationships, identifying all thoughts that could possibly
3 be selected as a new central thought from a current plex,
4 and all thoughts that would join the new central thought in
5 the resulting new plex upon the selection of any one of the
6 thoughts;

7 identifying the thoughts for which the desired
8 information is presently stored at the local device; and
9 sending from the remote device only that data
10 associated with each thought that could join the plex upon
11 the selection of a new central thought that is not already
12 stored at the local device.

13 44. The method of claim 43, wherein the results of at
14 least one of the steps of identifying are stored in a
15 ThoughtList.

16 45. The method of claim 1, wherein files that store
17 information relating to the matrix are embedded into
18 hypertext and are accessible from hypertext.

19 46. The method of claim 1, wherein files that store
20 information relating to said matrix comprise both internal
21 and external files.

22 47. The method of claim 46, wherein a user can
23 selectively convert internal files to external files, and
24 can selectively convert external files to internal files.

25 48. The method of claim 9 wherein files containing the

16 associated with the current thought.

17 54. An apparatus for organizing and processing
18 information using a computer, said information comprising a
19 plurality of thoughts and said apparatus comprising:

1 input means for defining a matrix comprising the
2 plurality of thoughts and further comprising a plurality of
3 network relationships among the thoughts, wherein each
4 thought may be related to at least one other of said
5 thoughts, and wherein at least one of said thoughts is
6 directly related to one of the other thoughts;

7 display means for displaying an indicium of a first
8 thought as a central thought and for displaying an indicium
9 of a second thought, said second thought having a direct
10 relation to said first thought; and

11 means for enabling selection of said second thought to
12 be a new central thought, whereby indicia of those thoughts
13 having defined relations with said second thought will be
14 displayed on said display.

15 55. A computer program product for organizing and
16 processing information using a computer, said information
17 comprising a plurality of thoughts and said product
18 comprising:

1 a computer-usable medium having computer-readable code
2 embodied therein, said computer-readable code comprising:

3 a matrix definition module which is configured so that
4 a matrix comprising the plurality of thoughts and further
5 comprising a plurality of network relationships among the
6 thoughts can be defined, wherein each thought may be related
7 to at least one other of said thoughts, and wherein at least
8 one of said thoughts is directly related to one of the other
9 thoughts;

10 a first display module which is configured to display
11 an indicium of a first thought as a central thought on the
12 display;

13 a second display module which is configured to display
14 an indicium of a second thought on said display, said second

15 thought having a direct relation to said first thought; and
16 a selection module which is configured to enable
17 selection of said second thought to be a new central
18 thought, whereby indicia of those thoughts having defined
19 relations with said second thought will be displayed on said
20 display.

21 56. A system for organizing and processing information
22 using a computer, said information comprising a plurality of
23 thoughts, and said system comprising:

1 input means for defining a matrix comprising the
2 plurality of thoughts and further comprising a plurality of
3 network relationships among the thoughts, wherein each
4 thought may be related to at least one other of said
5 thoughts, and wherein at least one of said thoughts is
6 directly related to one of the other thoughts;

7 a display for displaying an indicium of a first thought
8 as a central thought on the display; and

9 a display for displaying an indicium of a second
10 thought on said display, said second thought having a direct
11 relation to said first thought, wherein a user can select
12 said second thought to be a new central thought, whereby
13 indicia of those thoughts having defined relations with said
14 second thought will be displayed on said display.

15 57. A method for facilitating communications amongst
16 computers users of shared digitally stored content in a
17 network of computers, said method comprising the following
18 steps:

1 assigning each user a unique persistent identification
2 symbol;

3 transmitting that persistent identification symbol to
4 at least one other computer in said network each time one of
5 said users accesses a piece of said digitally stored
6 content; and

7 saving a record of the unique persistent identification
8 symbol of each current user and the piece of said digitally
9 stored content such user has most recently accessed in a

10 storage means accessible to that other computer.

11 58. A method for enabling computer users to publish
12 references to commonly accessible digitally stored content
13 to other users of a computer network, said method comprising
14 the following steps:

1 providing a standard method for representing said
2 references in a digitally stored file;

3 transmitting said file to at least one other computer
4 in said computer network;

5 storing said file in storage means accessible to that
6 other computer; and

7 providing means for still other computers to access
8 said storage means.

9 59. A method for facilitating navigation by human
10 speech commands amongst items of data stored digitally on a
11 computer, said method comprising the following steps:

1 assigning human language names for a plurality of said
2 items;

3 providing a database of spoken versions of such names,
4 or parts or aspects of said names;

5 providing means for inputting a spoken command into
6 said computer;

7 comparing said spoken command to said database;

8 determining whether any of said items had been assigned
9 to a name corresponding to said spoken command; and if so

10 outputting data related to the item to which said name
11 had been assigned.

12 60. A method for a computer to provide parallel
13 content items to a second computer in response to that
14 second computer's accessing primary content items, said
15 method comprising the following steps:

1 indexing each said parallel content items to correspond
2 to the identity of certain of said primary content items;

3 monitoring first said computers' access of one or more
4 primary content items;

5 delivering to first said computer any corresponding

6 items of parallel content.

7 61. The method of claim 57 wherein the first said
8 computer and the second said computer are connected in a
9 computer network.

10 62. The method of claim 57 wherein said primary
11 content consists of web pages, audiovisual works, text
12 documents, graphical documents, motion pictures, music, or
13 video.

14 63. The method of claim 57 wherein said parallel
15 content consists of navigational data, commentary, high-
16 bandwidth content, or contest-related information.

17 64. The method of claim 57 wherein said second
18 computer is capable of retrieving multiple channels of
19 parallel content corresponding to a single item of primary
20 content.

21 65. The method of claim 57 wherein said parallel
22 content is provided by users with varying access privileges
23 to add or modify parallel content stored by said first
24 computer.

25 66. The method of claim 62 wherein said access
26 privileges are changed dynamically in relation to said
27 user's score, recency of new content, payment, achievement
28 or other variable.